

91st Illinois General Assembly Senate Transcript

STATE OF ILLINOIS
91ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY
REGULAR SESSION
SENATE TRANSCRIPT

105th Legislative Day

November 14, 2000

PRESIDENT PHILIP:

The regular Session of the 91st General Assembly will please come to order. Will the Members please be at their desks? Will our guests in the galleries please rise? Our prayer today will be given by Dr. Reginald Mills, Central Baptist Church, Springfield, Illinois. Dr. Mills.

DR. REGINALD MILLS:

(Prayer by Dr. Reginald Mills)

PRESIDENT PHILIP:

Please remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance. Senator Radogno.

SENATOR RADOGNO:

(Pledge of Allegiance, led by Senator Radogno)

PRESIDENT PHILIP:

Reading of the Journal.

SECRETARY HARRY:

Senate Journal of Thursday, November 9th, 2000.

PRESIDENT PHILIP:

Senator Jones.

SENATOR W. JONES:

Mr. President, I move that the Journal just read by the Secretary be approved, unless some Senator has additions or corrections to offer.

PRESIDENT PHILIP:

Senator Jones moves to approve the Journal just read. There being no objection, so ordered. Mr. Secretary, have there been any motions filed?

SECRETARY HARRY:

Yes, Mr. President. Senator Karpiel has filed a motion with respect to Senate Bill 810.

PRESIDENT PHILIP:

Mr. Secretary, the Chair requests these motions be printed on

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the Calendar. So ordered. We have -- we've -- WAND has asked permission to photograph today. Is leave granted? Leave is granted. Resolutions.

SECRETARY HARRY:

Senate Resolution 438, offered by Senator Dudycz and all Members.

Senate Resolution 439, by Senator O'Malley and all Members.

Senate Resolution 440, by Senator Mitchell and all Members.

Senate Resolution 441, by Senator Link and all Members.

Senate Resolution 442, by Senator Dillard and all Members.

Senate Resolution 443, by Senator Demuzio and all Members.

And Senator Robert Madigan offers Senate Resolution 444.

They're all death resolutions, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT PHILIP:

Consent Calendar. You know, we are very, very fortunate today to have the Chinese General Consul from the -- the great country of China. He's here visiting. He's the -- he's the General Consul for nine states in the Midwest. And he's here to speak to the General Assembly and to give Senator Woodyard's widow a -- a plaque in recognition with his trips to China and his cooperation with China. So without further ado, I would like to present at this time General Wei Ruixing, the General Consul for the Republic of China. General Wei. Could we please have some quiet.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA CONSUL GENERAL WEI RUIXING:

(Remarks and Presentation by Consul General Wei Ruixing)

MRS. HARRY "BABE" WOODYARD:

(Remarks and Presentation by Mrs. Harry "Babe" Woodyard)

PRESIDENT PHILIP:

We have a request from WCIA-Channel 3 Central Illinois -- permission to tape today. Is leave granted? Leave is granted. House Bills 1st Reading.

SECRETARY HARRY:

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House Bill 3615, offered by Senator Philip.

(Secretary reads title of bill)

1st Reading of the bill.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Committee Reports.

SECRETARY HARRY:

Senator Weaver, Chair of the Committee on Rules, reports the following Legislative Measures have been assigned: Refer to the Committee on Executive - House Bill 3615, Senate Amendment 1 to Senate Bill 1869 and Senate Resolution 214; to the Committee on Insurance and Pensions - House Bill 4347; to the Committee on Judiciary - House Bill 3841; to the Committee on Local Government - House Bill 1712; to the Committee on Revenue - House Bill 1991; and to the Committee on Transportation - House Bill 4253; Be Approved for Consideration - Senate Bill 1854 and Senate Amendment 2 to Senate Bill 1867.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

...could have the attention of the Body. We're going to go to the top of page 2 on your regular Calendar, Senate Bill 1887 {sic}, for the purposes of a recall. Senator Watson, do you wish to return to 2nd Reading Senate Bill 1867? Senator Watson seeks leave of the Body to return Senate Bill 1867 to the Order of 2nd Reading for the purposes of an amendment. Hearing no objection, leave is granted. On the Order of 2nd Reading is Senate Bill

1867. Mr. Secretary, are there any Floor amendments approved for consideration?

SECRETARY HARRY:

Amendment No. 2, offered by Senators Watson and Philip.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Watson.

SENATOR WATSON:

Yes. Thank you very much, Madam President. This is --

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amendment deals with the gas tax issue that we've heard so much about. This is the amendment which will strike the date of December 31st, 2000, from the bill, and this will make the elimination of sales tax on gasoline permanent.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Is there any discussion? Senator Demuzio.

SENATOR DEMUZIO:

Well, I'd like to call attention to the Membership so that we all know what we're doing here. I have not seen the amendment, although the amendment is now directly on the Floor and we are adopting the -- the amendment. I assume that the amendment says that this is a permanent withdrawal of the gasoline tax. Is that

correct? And we're not -- we're not extending it; we're simply eliminating it. Is that correct?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Watson.

SENATOR WATSON:

That is correct. This is the sales tax only that we are making permanent - the elimination of it.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Demuzio.

SENATOR DEMUZIO:

Has the Department of Revenue issued their report since we asked them to, apparently to determine whether or not - or Economic and Fiscal, I guess it is, and I think Revenue's going to come out with something too, I think, very shortly - indicating that this action has been providing a reduction to the -- to the consumer and/or what is the revenue loss or gain since we eliminated the gas tax?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Watson.

SENATOR WATSON:

Well, that's a hard question to actually answer. It is the Economic and Fiscal Commission report we just got, actually, today. Was -- this was the deadline for which the report was to be issued. I just got a copy of it today. It answers, a great deal, a number of the questions that you've just asked in here. But from -- all indications are this has been a very successful effort. What we tried to do initially, when we took off the sales tax, one of the things we wanted to do, obviously, was see an increase in the sales of gasoline. That has resulted throughout this State, primarily more so on the border areas of the State. But it's been very successful in that regard, and as a result, a great deal of revenue has come in through the motor fuel tax, ancillary sales, lottery, and other sales that have taken place. So there is an impact, a fiscal impact. We're not sure what that might be. We think there's considerable offset to that fiscal impact which will minimize the -- the loss of revenue to the State of Illinois.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Please take your conversations off the Floor. Senator Demuzio.

SENATOR DEMUZIO:

Well, I have a Post-Dispatch article that's before me that unfortunately - on -- on October the 30th - which indicates that the Illinois gas sales increase after the -- increase after the tax cut. Missouri's has gone down just as its neighbor legislator -- Legislature tried the temporary tax cut; industry groups want to cut it -- make the cut permanent. I -- I believe -- and by the way, none of our side of the aisle have seen the Economic and Fiscal report, except those individuals -- except those -- except

Senator Welch, who just received a copy. And he's not exactly the fastest reader in the world. But then they -- but the problem is, I'm not sure where I am on the issue. I think I'm with you on

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this, but I would certainly like to know what the -- what the -- what the data and what the statistics are from the various agencies. I'm one of those who had argued that -- that the competitiveness, of making Illinois competitive with our surrounding states and adjacent states, was one that the revenue loss wouldn't be as substantial as they were indicating in the beginning. I'd like to see what those numbers are, and I know, I guess, we're trying to adopt this amendment simply to -- to resolve and save a legislative day. Is it your intention to call this, then, tomorrow or Thursday?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Watson.

SENATOR WATSON:

Be tomorrow.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Further discussion? Senator Hendon. Oh! I'm sorry, Senator Demuzio.

SENATOR DEMUZIO:

What -- what has -- what has been the revenue loss to Illinois since we suspended the gas tax, and -- and what are the estimates for next year?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Watson.

SENATOR WATSON:

Well, as I mentioned earlier when you asked the question, it's the -- the figures we're getting are fuzzy. That seems to be a word that's being used now when we talk about figures that we get from some of our agencies. But, anyway, the impact has been -- the -- the estimated impact was roughly three hundred million - is what I've read. But there -- the problem is, is the offset. It's hard to indicate how much new revenue is coming in to the State of Illinois as a result of the increase in sales of gasoline. And

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it's significant. So I think that the offset will have an impact on the loss. Sure, there's going to be some loss of revenue, but I'm not sure to what extent.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Demuzio.

SENATOR DEMUZIO:

Well, it's strange that you would use that term "fuzzy", but I'll -- I'll let that go. Could I ask you this question, then: After the amendment is adopted and you call it for passage tomorrow, and I know we're bypassing committee, would it not be in our interest as a -- as a Body to have a hearing in the morning, whereby we could have Revenue and Economic and Fiscal come in and present to the Executive Committee, perhaps, or a Committee as a Whole some of those numbers so that we would know exactly what we are doing and what we are voting on before we -- before our Members are asked to make this permanent? Would that be -- would that be in order? Would you be opposed to that?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Ladies and Gentlemen, would you please take your conversations off the Floor so we can hear this important debate? Senator Watson.

SENATOR WATSON:

Yes. Thank you. Well, we do have the report. Everyone should have it by now, and if you don't, why, I'm certain that the Economic and Fiscal Commission will make it available to you. We've been discussing this issue, the removal of sales tax on gasoline, for about as long as I've been in the Senate. I mean, we've made attempts to do this. We think that it's poor public policy to have tax on tax. And that's what we've been doing. So our position - or, at least, mine, and I think most of the Members who support this - is that this is the right thing to do, and I understand that there'll be some loss of revenue and some concerns

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about that, but this is the -- the right thing to do from a taxing policy and from a policy of making the State of Illinois competitive with our surrounding states.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Demuzio.

SENATOR DEMUZIO:

Well, thank you for making my speech. The question that I asked you - and I'm not arguing the merits - all I want to know is whether or not it's possible to have a hearing in the morning, perhaps for an hour, to allow those individuals who have the data with -- with respect to what we -- what impact that it has and the futuristic outlook for us to make an informed decision. I mean, I -- I voted for this last time. I probably will vote for it again, but, at least, I think the Body ought to have the benefit of having a hearing, knowing exactly what the numbers are. And -- that seems to be a simple request. I mean, if we adopt the amendment today, it's out of committee, it's on the Floor. We'd just like to know from the experts, so-called experts, what -- what -- what we're about.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Further discussion? Senator Hendon.

SENATOR HENDON:

Thank you, Madam President. Could I yield to Senator Welch, and could you come to me after our Chairman, because he is Chairman of Ec and Fisc?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Madam President. Senator Watson, the only copy of the Economic and Fiscal report that's been delivered is this copy right here in my hand, and that's because I'm the Co-chairman of the committee. So no -- the other Members have not had a chance

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to see this. But, you know, we've had a bill similar to this in the Revenue Committee the last two or three years. And each time it was presented there was a projection there would be one hundred and fifteen million dollars in ancillary sales taxes returned to the State that would offset the loss from the -- the gasoline tax elimination -- the sales tax on gasoline elimination. Unfortunately, the report that we requested the Economic and Fiscal Commission to come back with says they don't have enough time to make any determination if there's been an increase in

sales taxes due to ancillary sales at -- at stations. So I was wondering if we couldn't just have a hearing, as Senator Demuzio suggested, and have the people from Economic and Fiscal Commission show up to testify before, I guess it would be, the Revenue Committee - be my estimation; they've been -- we've been before that committee twice before on this particular type of bill - to let us know what they came up with. We asked for this report. It's just finished today. And -- and now to try to pop this out without a hearing from the people who did the report would seem, to me, to be somewhat unfair to the Members. Not all of the Members, obviously, have -- are aware of the -- the testimony in the Revenue Committee over the last couple of years. In fact, the last time the Petroleum Marketers testified on this particular issue to repeal the sales tax, they wanted it to be in effect only three years, and after three years, if it didn't save money as they said, they would agree to reinstate the sales tax on gasoline. So even they weren't willing to go as far as this -- this amendment would. So I would ask that you refer this bill to either the Revenue Committee or Executive Committee so that we can have some testimony. That's all we're asking for. Is that possible, Senator Watson?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Watson.

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SENATOR WATSON:

Well, as I said, this is an issue we've debated many times. It's not my call to make that -- make that decision, Senator Welch. So, at this point, I think we've got the information available to us, and I understand these, I guess, are in our offices. I know all the Leaders got one and I think it should have gotten to -- to each individual office, hopefully, this morning. So you've got the opportunity tonight and this afternoon and early in the morning to take a look at this and get an idea of what it says. And I think it -- if you do read it and you do determine, as I have, that this has been a success, that it has worked, and it needs to be made permanent.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator -- just a second, Senator Welch. The Associated Press requests leave to take photos. Is leave granted? Leave is granted. Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Well, let me quote one section from it, particular ancillary sales. Those are sales when you go to a gas station, you go in and you buy either cigarettes, lottery tickets, food, stay overnight if it's a truck stop, whatever -- whatever you want to do in a -- in a gas station or truck stop. Here's what their executive summary says: "...based on the estimated impact of one hundred and seventy-five million dollars in lost sales tax over the six-month period, overall sales tax revenue(s) have performed very close to projections." The projection was we'd lose a

hundred and seventy-five million dollars, and we did. "As a result, it does not appear that a measurable impact on ancillary sales has been felt." In other words, there have been no increase in ancillary sales from these gasoline stations. So, to me, that indicates that all of the testimony that we had in Revenue Committee over the last three years about there being a hundred

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and fifteen million dollars in ancillary sales taxes -- tax increase isn't holding up by this report. This report, though, has only been for four months. That's why we probably need more time to study this issue. And, to me, it would make perfect sense for you to make a motion to refer it back to the Revenue Committee on this amendment so that the Revenue Committee could meet tomorrow and -- and discuss this. I think that's within your authority. I don't think it's out of your hands. I think it's -- it's well within your hands to -- to make a motion to refer this to the Revenue Committee for a hearing. And I think that would clear up a lot of misinformation and -- and give people time to figure out exactly what the report talks about and what the Department of Revenue statements are. They may have a differing opinion than the -- than this report. But to just rush ahead and

do this when we've got -- we're going to be here three days, with very little else to do, and this is probably going to be the most important thing we do. I don't -- I don't see why it would hurt to have a hearing tomorrow.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Further discussion? Senator Geo-Karis.

SENATOR GEO-KARIS:

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Senate, we have debated this issue time and again and time and again. There's no one in here who doesn't know what -- what we're trying to do. Indiana is taking back its repeal of the gas tax. I think time is of the essence. I think we should move ahead and get this done. And I don't know why we have to worry about the ancillary stuff; we haven't given it a decent chance. Give it a chance, and let's go forward and go ahead with the repeal of the gas tax. It's an onerous tax to begin with, and I can tell you the people of Illinois, for the most part, would like to see it permanently repealed.

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PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Further discussion? Senator Hendon.

SENATOR HENDON:

Thank you, Madam President. I appreciate you allowing me to yield to Senator Welch earlier. Senator Watson, I just -- you know, I voted for this before and -- but there was a discussion before as to why we were doing it. And I believe you said, if I recall correctly, so that the savings would be passed on to the consumer. I've got gas recently all over the State - well, all over the north -- northwest part of the State and in North Chicago and Waukegan. In Chicago, I haven't seen that savings passed down to the consumer. Is there anything in your amendment that will make sure that your commitment made earlier, that the savings would go to the consumer, is there anything to make sure that that takes place?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Watson.

SENATOR WATSON:

Well, I certainly shared that concern and -- and, you're right, I -- I -- at the time we passed this, I made a pretty direct plea to the Petroleum Marketers and the retailers of gasoline in this State that they pass this on. One thing I did in my area is I went out Friday night, before the tax took effect at midnight, checked the price of gasoline. The next morning, Saturday morning, I went around to different gas stations throughout my district and -- to see if the -- if, in fact, it was passed on. And in my area, it was. And if you'll look in the report, the Economic and Fiscal report, on page 29, it says "Was the reduction in the State sales tax passed on through to motorists?" And overwhelmingly, yes, indeed, it was. And if --

you can read this for yourself, without me reading it for you.
But it does say the Commission asked respondents how the motor

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fuel tax sales suspension affected their fuel price after July 1st of 2000. Over sixty percent replied that the price of gasoline decreased between six and eight cents, and almost thirty percent believe that the price per gallon decreased over eight cents, and no one indicated that the price did not change. So from this, the Economic and Fiscal survey that was done, I do believe that the vast majority of the savings was passed on to the motoring public here in Illinois.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Hendon.

SENATOR HENDON:

I agree with you. Now, I am trying to read it. But I -- I do want to say this: I'd like to know if Senator Rauschenberger and other Senators on Economic Development {sic} and Fiscal, especially Senator Lauzen, who is a fiscally responsible legislator, such as my colleagues who just spoke, if they've had an opportunity to see the report. I have it on my desk now, but I just got it from our Chair -- Co-chair, Senator Welch, who just

received it. So I don't see that there's any rush to do this without giving us an opportunity to read it. Now, I agree with you that upon immediate passage there was a reduction in the gasoline tax -- I mean, prices at the pump. But are you saying that, as we stand here today, prices have not crept steadily back up since then? Because I believe that the prices have steadily crept back up. So they did the reduction immediately, but now they're back up to where they were before. Have you observed that, or are you saying that, as we speak to now, the savings are being passed on to consumer today?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Watson.

SENATOR WATSON:

Well, who knows! I mean, competition and the marketplace is

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where this belongs. And what I've found in my area, and I would assume in the vast majority of your gas stations in your district, that is the most competitive business that there is in the State of Illinois and probably throughout this country. People will literally go across the street and buy gasoline if it's a penny less. Service doesn't matter any more. Loyalty doesn't matter.

They -- competition drives this business. And if these people don't compete, they lose out. So let's let the free market take its place here, as it should, and the determination be made at that place. And I think that, yes, indeed, that the vast majority of the savings that we've given to the people through this tax relief has been passed on. It's been passed on to the people. I can tell you, in my area, the sale of gasoline has -- has skyrocketed as a result of what we've done here. And the reason for that is, Missouri now is actually, in some cases, higher. It used to be ten, twelve cents more a gallon in Illinois than it was in Missouri. We've got figures here that show that Missouri gasoline sales has actually gone down, and is a result of what we've done. So, yes, indeed, that savings has been passed on to the public.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Hendon.

SENATOR HENDON:

I -- I will conclude with this, Madam Chairman. I thank you for your patience with me, as well as the other Members. But, Senator Watson, I'm just going to remind you of some argument that you made when you passed this legislation previously. And I'm going to continue to make this -- this -- have this discussion even though I'm going to vote with you, because originally I thought it was a great idea, before it ended up being carried by a Republican. But that's neither here or there. But in -- in -- in the first version that we had, the main thing was to help the

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consumer, the consumer, the consumer. I -- I saw you stand there and you beat the heck out of the big oil. You pounded your desk and you said, god doggit, if they don't pass this on to the consumer, we'll be back and we're going to put the tax back on and we're going to do this and do that. What happened to all those glorious speeches you made when you wanted this passed before, that if it didn't go to the consumer, it would not happen? And I do not believe, sir -- I must have didn't hear you correctly, but I do not believe for one moment that you're saying that the prices are not, right now, almost as high as they were when we passed this originally, because they have crept steadily back up. Sure, they gave us a break the first day, but about a week later they began to climb and climb and climb. And right now, the price of regular in my community and throughout Chicago and throughout Cook County is almost just as high as it was when you made your glorious outstanding speech about how you was going to take care of big oil if they did not take care of the people of Illinois. They have not taken care of the people of Illinois. You know it, and I know it. So why rush to judgment? Why not give us the opportunity to see what the benefits are for this, so that our Governor can continue with his program to fund these different programs throughout the State?

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Further discussion? Senator O'Daniel.

SENATOR O'DANIEL:

Thank you, Madam President. I rise in strong support of Floor Amendment No. 2 to Senate Bill 1867. You know, they talk about the prices and all. If we pass this, it isn't immediately going to -- you aren't going to see prices plummet, but what it'll do, it'll make us competitive with other states and we'll sell more fuel. And they talk about the price has not gone down. The Mideast is what dictates our prices. It isn't -- it isn't the --

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the petroleum industry here in this country, because we don't have enough petroleum to take care of our needs. The Middle East are the ones who will set the prices. But what this will do, it will make us competitive, where we'll sell more fuel. We'll generate more road funds. Arthur Andersen has done extensive services on -- studies on this, and every one of them -- every state that's done this has -- has increased revenue rather than lose it. And I can't believe Illinois will be any different than -- than the other states that have removed the sales tax. And I -- rise in strong support of this.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Further discussion? Senator Emil Jones.

SENATOR E. JONES:

Thank you, Madam President. All the debate on this side of the aisle has related to the facts. And the issues that we are dealing with is not whether or not the gas tax should have come off or not; the issue we're dealing with is whether or not the revenue that the State was supposed to receive and -- and the impact that it has had. Those issues are the issues that we should be debating. Now, if Senator Watson is correct in saying all these things happened, then why are you afraid to have Ec and Fisc come before a committee hearing, have the Department of Revenue come in, and say let's discuss those issues? But if you are afraid to hear the true facts and you're trying to hide something, and which I believe that you are, if the MFT funds, the motor fuel tax funds, have increased drastically because the sales have gone up drastically, then why not have the Revenue Department come before committee and testify? They're not here to testify now. I voted for it even though I was against it last time. I intend to vote against it this time simply because you are trying to hide something. What are you afraid of? It doesn't take effect until January 1, according to your bill. We'll be here

after Thanksgiving, for three more days after this week. So we have plenty of time to have the proper departments come in to deal with this issue. Members who supported it on this side of the aisle raised those same very questions. Have the revenue come in as a result of us taking this tax off? I don't believe it has. I believe it went to the pockets of the Petroleum Marketers, the fat cats. In Chicago, in some stations - I want you to hear this - some stations in Chicago, they posted on the window prior to the -- prior -- the -- two days after we left here, prior to the official notification came out where they had to post on the station. On one station, in particular, they had a sign that said your gas price is being reduced by ten cents. But what they failed to realize, I looked at the marquis with the price on that. They reduced it by a nickle. I went there, Senator O'Malley, in your district, a 111th and Pulaski. The gas price there was ten cents less than it was, perhaps, in Senator Hendon's district. So you go on and on. But we're talking about revenue and revenue loss. Have the consumers benefitted? Maybe in some quarters, but not throughout the entire State of Illinois. Has the revenue come in too, as it relate to the MFT funds? We don't know that. You do not want them to come in and testify. You've got something to hide. And -- and why you're trying to hide, I don't know, but I don't think the Members on your side of the aisle or on this side of the aisle should be voting in the blind. And evidently, that's what you want them to do. You talk about Ec and Fisc. Well, Ec and Fisc do not support what you are talking about. And it's shocking that you wait until the day you're going to call the bill

and you hand out an Ec and Fisc report. That's ridiculous. Whether you're for it or against it, at least you should have the resources there in front of you so you can vote intelligently on this issue. I do not intend to support the proposal.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

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Senator Demuzio, for a second time.

SENATOR DEMUZIO:

Well -- well, again, I want to -- I want to reiterate the same remarks that I made with respect to the -- back in -- whenever we passed the -- the gas tax elimination or the -- the six-month period of suspension, that this was a competition issue, not one that dealt with -- with anything other than that. The article that I referred to earlier in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch indicated that the sales of wholesale gasoline in Missouri dropped 1.8 million to fifty-six million dollars or an eight million dollar -- or eight million gallons from June to July. And it seems to me that there is, according to what they are saying, that during the same period Illinois sold nearly seven more -- seven million more gallons of gasoline. So all I was looking for was the data to -- from Illinois. I am not here to be dilatory, to

attempt to -- not to support the -- the bill. But I do think that having the complete facts before us giving us the figures and the impact, for those of us that will be looking at next year's budget, would've been -- would have been the proper thing for us to do. Perhaps, Senator Watson, if you are not inclined to have some sort of a -- of a Committee of the Whole or a hearing tomorrow, I guess, then, it behooves us to, perhaps, go to -- to go to caucus and perhaps then ask the various individuals from Revenue or Economic and Fiscal to come in and to give these facts to our -- to our respective caucuses tomorrow, before our final vote. And I think that's, perhaps, the course that we will probably embark. Thank you.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Senator Watson, to close.

SENATOR WATSON:

Well, thank you. I'd just remind the Body, this is the amendment. We're not on 3rd Reading. So I don't know that we

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needed to go into an extent of the debate as what we have. But one thing, certainly, that could happen is -- one of the individuals who got up to speak and talked about having this go to

committee is one of the Co-chairs of the Economic and Fiscal Commission. There's no reason why the Chairs and Co-chairs can't get together and have the Economic and Fiscal Commission meet tomorrow morning and make it available to any Member of the Senate and the House who would like to go. I think that's within the parameters of the Chair and I think that we would certainly welcome that, if that's what -- wish -- what he would like to do. And you certainly can do that if you would like. In regard to the -- Senator Demuzio's comment, and he was referring to the Post-Dispatch article that -- that I have here, from all indications are -- and what we wanted from this was, obviously, an increase in the sale of gasoline, to make our State competitive, and that has happened as a result of the article that we have here on the information that came from the Department of Revenue, showing that seven million more gallons of gasoline were sold in July of this year than -- than what previously had been sold. And I just want to get back to the original point of what we've been all about, most of us who've supported this issue, is the taxing policy of this State. I think most of us recognize that tax on tax is a poor policy. And that's what this is. This sales tax is actually a tax on tax. And we would like to see that eliminated. And, obviously, we'd -- we'd like to see our marketers and our businesspeople in this State become competitive with our surrounding states. That's basically what this is all about. That's why we've driven this issue for as many years as we have. And I would welcome, obviously, the support of all the Members of this Body.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Have all -- have all... All those in favor, say Aye.

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Opposed, Nay. The Ayes have it, and the amendment is adopted.

Any further amendments approved for consideration?

SECRETARY HARRY:

No further amendments reported.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

3rd Reading. Motions. Mr. Secretary, have there been any motions filed?

SECRETARY HARRY:

Yes, Madam President. Senator Jones has filed a motion with respect to Senate Bill 1404, and Senator Dillard has filed a motion with respect to Senate Bill 1426.

PRESIDING OFFICER: (SENATOR DONAHUE)

Mr. Secretary, the Chair requests that those motions be printed on the Calendar. So ordered. If I could have the Members' attention just to fill you in on the schedule for tomorrow. We will be adjourning until -- we will be adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning, which we will do a joint proclamation. And then at 11 o'clock, in the House of Representatives, there will be a Joint Session, dealing with a Cuban -- yeah, a guest from Cuba, who will be addressing both

Chambers. So that will be at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning. The committees will meet as scheduled. Also, we'll be recessing in the morning to the call of the Chair. So, just -- we won't be adjourning in the morning. We'll be open to come back after the House -- Joint Session, yes. All right. If there's any further business to come before the Senate? If not, Senator Weaver moves that the Senate stand adjourned until 9 a.m., Wednesday, November 15th. The Senate is adjourned.